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## Mahā Sārôpama Sutta

The Greater Discourse on the Heartwood Parable | M 29

Theme: Worldly success is not spiritual progress

Translated &amp; annotated by Piya Tan ©2009, 2018

1 Sutta summary and highlights

## 1.1 SUTTA SUMMARY

**1.1.1 The Mahā Sārôpama Sutta**, the “greater discourse on the heartwood parable,” examines the types of acquisitions—“gains, honour and fame” (*lābha, sakkāra, siloka*), moral virtue, attainment of samadhi, and knowledge and vision—that should not be mistaken for the goal of the holy life.

Worldly gain is neither a motive nor measure for spiritual awakening. Indeed, this Sutta highlights the truth that the attachment to worldly gain is clearly a hindrance to spiritual progress. Religious attainment of any kind is not the goal of the spiritual life. That true goal is the “unshakeable liberation of mind” (*akuppā ceto, vimutti*) [§18.2].

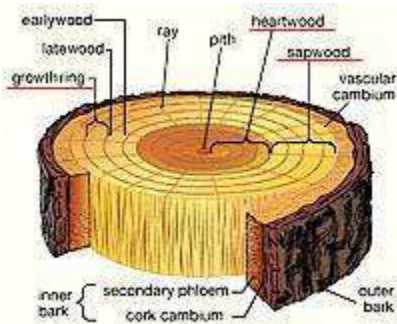
**1.1.2** The Mahā Sārôpama Sutta can be **summarized** as follows:

- [§1.2] The Buddha gives a teaching related to **Deva, datta**’s recent unwholesome activities.<sup>1</sup>
- [§2] A person goes forth out of faith to be free of suffering.
- [§3] He obtains **gains, honours and fame**; praises himself, blames others. He is heedless—hence, dwells in suffering.
- [§§4-5] A renunciant is like one seeking heartwood but takes instead only **the branches and foliage**. He is said to be “one who grasps the branches and foliage of the holy life” (*sākhā, palāsam aggahesi brahma, cariyassa*).
- [§§6-8] Such a renunciant obtains gains, honours and fame, but is **morally virtuous**; praises himself, blames others. He is heedless—hence, dwells in suffering. He is like one seeking heartwood, but takes instead only **the outer bark**. He is said to be “one who grasps the outer bark of the holy life” (*papaṭikam aggahesi brahma, cariyassa*).
- [§§9-11] A renunciant obtains gains, honours and fame, but also **gains samadhi**; praises himself, blames others. He is heedless—hence, dwells in suffering. He is like one seeking heartwood, but takes instead only **the inner bark**. He is said to be “one who grasps the inner bark of the holy life” (*tacam aggahesi brahma, cariyassa*).
- [§§12-14] A renunciant obtains gains, honours and fame, but goes on to **gain knowledge and vision**; praises himself, blames others. He is heedless—hence, dwells in suffering. He is like one seeking heartwood, but takes instead only **the sapwood**. He is said to be “one who grasps the sapwood of the holy life” (*pheggum aggahesi brahma, cariyassa*).
- [§§15-19] A renunciant has gains, honours and fame but is not attached to them, nor to any of his other attainments. Hence, he is not heedless: he is morally virtuous, accomplished in samadhi,

<sup>1</sup> M 29/1:192,3: *bhagavā devadattam ārabha bhikkhū āmantesi*. Deva, datta’s attempt at creating a schism is reported in V 2:199,1; for a comparative study of the accounts of this attempt in the different Vinayas, see esp Bareau 1991 and Mukherjee 1966; for a brief survey of the relevant Vinaya passages, see Frauwallner 1956:117-120. On Devadatta, see also Bareau 1988b:538-547, Boucher 2008:46-49, Deeg 1999, id 2004; Dhirasekera 1988; Hocart 1923 (on which, see Emeneau 1939 and Mitra 1924), Jing Yin 2009, Klimkeit 1990:24-127, Lamotte 1949: 868-878, id 1970; Ray 1994:62-173; Sarao 1989:63-65, id 2004; Tinti 1997, and Waldschmidt 1964.

gains knowledge and vision—and **attains permanent liberation**. It is impossible for him to fall away. He is like one who seeks heartwood and finds it. He is one who acts “knowing that this is the heartwood” (*sāran’ti jānamāno*).

### 1.1.3 The layers of good wood



**Fig 1.1.3: The layers of good wood**

<http://selectwoodfloorsonline.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/07/heart.jpg>

Both the **Mahā Sārôpama Sutta** (M 29) and the **Cūḷa Sārôpama Sutta** (M 30) employ the same set of the 5 main layers of good wood in its parable with the following similes:

		<b>attainments</b>	<b>M 29 (SD 53.8)</b>	<b>M 39 (SD 53.9)</b>
(1) branches and foliage	<i>sākha, palāsa</i>	gains, honours and fame	§§4-5	§§4, 9
(2) outer bark	<i>papaṭika</i>	moral virtue	§§6-8	§§5, 10
(3) inner bark	<i>taca</i>	samadhi (meditation)	§§9-11	§§6, 11
(4) sapwood	<i>pheggu</i>	knowledge and vision	§§12-14	§§7, 12
(5) heartwood	<i>sāra</i>	(true freedom)	§§15-16	§§8, 13

**Table 1.1.3.** The similes of the M 29 and M 30<sup>2</sup>

In (5), the **Mahā Sārôpama Sutta** calls the true final attainment “the unshakeable freedom” (*akuppa ceto, vimutti*), that is, the 4 paths, the 4 fruitions and nirvana, while the **Cūḷa Sārôpama Sutta** calls it “permanent freedom” (*asamaya vimokkha*), which refers to the fruition of arhathood. Essentially, the goals are the same in either case—while the Mahā Sārôpama Sutta states the goal more broadly—as the whole path of awakening—the Cūḷa Sārôpama Sutta states it as the specific ultimate goal, the path’s end, nirvana—represented by the “attainment of the cessation of perception and feelings.”<sup>3</sup>

## 1.2 SUTTA CONTEXT

### 1.2.1 The occasion for the Sutta

**1.2.1.1 The Mahā Sārôpama Sutta** (M 29) records the Buddha’s teaching “not long after Deva, datta had left” [§1.2]. This refers to Devadatta’s unsuccessful attempts to kill the Buddha and usurp the leader-

<sup>2</sup> See SD 53.9 (1.2.2).

<sup>3</sup> See **Cūḷa Sārôpama S** (M 30,20), SD 53.9.



**1.2.3 Unshakeable freedom.** The Sutta concludes by stating that the true goal of the holy life is neither material gain, nor moral virtue, nor mental concentration, nor even knowledge-and-vision—but only **the unshakeable freedom of the mind** (*akuppā ceto,vimutti*)<sup>12</sup> [§18]. In fact, both the Mahā Sārôpama Sutta and the Cūḷa Sārôpama Sutta conclude by highlighting its goal as *the unshakeable freedom of mind*, that is, the fruition of arhathood.<sup>13</sup>

The Ekottarika Āgama version does not mention *knowledge and vision*. It moves from describing how a monk gains concentration to his attaining of wisdom, at which point it qualifies such a monk as “the first and foremost.”<sup>14</sup>

**1.2.4 The heartwood parable** is a popular one, most often found in the Majjhima Nikaya:

Madhu,piṇḍika Sutta	M 18,12/1:111,6	SD 6.14
Cūḷa Sārôpama Sutta	M 30,3/1:198,20	SD 53.9
Mahā Kaccāna Bhadd’eka,ratta Sutta	M 133,9/3:194,32	SD 109.10
Uddesa Vibhaṅga Sutta	M 138,6/3:224,21	SD 33.14
Lok’anta Gamana Sutta	S 35.116/4:94,23	SD 7.4
Kāma,guṇa Sutta	S 35.117/4:99,27	SD 88.6
(Dasaka) Appamāda Sutta	A 10.15,9/5:22,4 <i>sāra,gandha</i>	SD 42.23
(Dasaka) Adhamma Sutta 2	A 10.172/5:256,21	SD 94.15

In the (Pañcaka) Dussīla Sutta (A 5.24), moral virtue (*sīla*) is the proximate condition for right concentration (the dhyanas)—moral virtue is like the branches and foliage that a tree needs to be able to grow.<sup>15</sup>

### 1.2.5 Conclusion

**1.2.5.1 The Ekottarika Āgama version** continues with the Buddha answering a question by one of the monks concerning Deva,datta. Then, there follows verses spoken by the Buddha in praise of liberating wisdom.

After these verses, the Buddha sums up his teaching by linking greed for material gains to wrong views. Having wrong views will, in turn, lead to the wrong limbs for the rest of the path—*wrong thought, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindfulness and wrong concentration*. This is **the ignoble path**. Then, the Buddha exhorts the monks to reject material gains.

**1.2.5.2** The Ekottarika Āgama discourse concludes by reporting that this teaching on the dangers of being drawn to material gains has a strong effect on the monks, since it incites a group of over 60 monks to disrobe, while another group of a similar size became arhats.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup> M 29/1:197,29; on the term *akuppā*, see Hara 2005.

<sup>13</sup> See M 30,24 (SD 53.9). On the details of the differences between the goals in the 2 Suttas, see SD 53.9 (1.2.2).

<sup>14</sup> EĀ 43.4 (T2.759c1).

<sup>15</sup> A 5.24/3:20,16 (SD 59.14).

<sup>16</sup> EĀ 43.4 (T2.759c26) reports that the second group of over 60 monks attained the destruction of the influxes, ie, became arhats, and attained the Dharma-eye, ie, became streamwinners: 復有六十餘比丘,漏盡意解,諸塵垢盡,得法眼淨 *fù yǒu liù shí yú bǐ qiū, lòu jìn yì jiě, zhū chén gòu jìn, dé fǎ yǎn jìng*. This clearly indicates that Mahā Sārôpama S has such an impact on the monks as to enable them break out of their worldly-state to attain streamwinning, even arhathood.

**1.2.5.3** A discourse in the Aṅguttara Nikāya and its counterparts in the Madhyama Āgama and the Ekottarika Āgama report a similar outcome for another discourse given by the Buddha, which vividly illustrates the dire consequences incurred by a monk who engages in bad conduct.<sup>17</sup>

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## Mahā Sārôpama Sutta

### The Greater Discourse on the Heartwood Parable

(M 29)

[The sequence of the paragraph numbering follows that of the Buddha Jayanti Tipīṭaka version.]

1 Thus have I heard.

#### (1) Danger of gains, honours, fame

1.2 At one time, the Blessed One was staying on Mount Vulture Peak, outside Rājagaha, not long after Deva,datta had left.<sup>18</sup>

There, the Blessed One addressed the monks regarding **Deva,datta**, thus:

2 “Here, bhikshus, **a certain son of family**, out of faith, goes forth from the household life into homelessness, thinking,

2.2 ‘I am beset by birth, decay, death, sorrow, lamentation, bodily pains, mental pains and despair; beset by suffering; overcome by suffering.’<sup>19</sup>

Perhaps an ending of this whole mass of suffering could be known.’<sup>20</sup>

3 When he has thus gone forth as a recluse, this brings him **gains, honours and fame**.<sup>21</sup>

*On account of the gains, honours and fame, he is satisfied, his intention fulfilled.*<sup>22</sup>

*On account of the gains, honours and fame, he lauds himself and blames others, thus:*<sup>23</sup>

‘I am one with gains, honours and fame, but these other monks are *little known, of no account*.’<sup>24</sup>

<sup>17</sup> A 7.68/4:135,5, MĀ 5 (T1.427a3) and EĀ 33.10 (T2.689c1) conclude with 60 monks disrobing and 60 monks becoming arhats, a result also reported at the conclusion of EĀ 43.5 (T2.761b11).

<sup>18</sup> See (1.2.1).

<sup>19</sup> *Otiṇṇo’ mhi jātiyā jarāya maraṇena sokehi paridevehi dukkhehi domanassehi upāyāsehi*. This and the foll sentence occurs 10x in **Mahā Sārôpama S** (M 29,2.2+5.2+6.2+8.2+9.2+11.2+12.2+14.2+15.2+17.2) and 4x in **Cūḷa Sārôpama Sutta** (M 30,8/1:200), SD 53.9; also 4x in **Cātuma S** (M 67,16+17+18+29), SD 34.7; 4x in **Ūmi,bhaya S** (A 4.122,-5+14+29+41), SD 47.9.

<sup>20</sup> *Dukkh’otiṇṇo dukkha,pareto, app’eva nāma imassa kevalassa dukkha-k,khandhassa anta,kiriya paññāyethāti*.

<sup>21</sup> *So evaṃ pabbajito samāno lābha,sakkāra,silokaṃ abhinibbatteti*. This sentence occurs 10x in in **Mahā Sārôpama S** (M 29) in the same context as above and 5x in **Cūḷa Sārôpama Sutta** (M 30,9,3+10.3+11.3+12.3+13.3). The phrase *lābha,sakkāra,silokaṃ abhinibbatteti* (other than here) occurs 9x in **Udumbarikā Sīha,nāda S** (D 25,10+13), SD 1,4. See also S 2:226 ff (6x); A 2:73 (10x), 3:343.

<sup>22</sup> *So tena lābha,sakkāra,silokena attamano hoti paripuṇṇa,saṅkappo*.

<sup>23</sup> *So tena lābha,sakkāra,silokena attānukkaṃseti param vambheti*.

3.2 *On account of the gains, honours and fame, he is intoxicated, heedless, falls into heedlessness.*  
Being heedless, he dwells in suffering.<sup>25</sup>

### The heartwood-seeker who takes only branches and foliage

4 Suppose,<sup>26</sup> bhikshus, a person needing **heartwood**, wandering about seeking heartwood, in quest of heartwood, comes across just such a huge tree standing possessed of heartwood.<sup>27</sup>

4.2 Disregarding the heartwood, the sapwood, the inner bark and the outer bark, he trims off **the branches and foliage** and takes them away, thinking that they were heartwood.

4.3 **A man with good eyes**, seeing him, would say:

‘Alas! This good man knows not heartwood. He knows *not* sapwood. He knows *not* the inner bark. He knows *not* the outer bark. He knows *not* branches and foliage.

4.4 Thus, this good man, *needing heartwood, wandering about seeking heartwood, in quest of heartwood, comes across just such a huge tree standing possessed of heartwood.*

4.5 *Disregarding the heartwood, the sapwood, the inner bark, the outer bark, he trims off the branches and foliage and takes them away, thinking that they were heartwood.*

4.6 Whatever it is that is to be made from heartwood, there will be *no* such benefit for him!<sup>28</sup>

#### REFRAIN 1 (THE WORLDLY)

5 Even so, bhikshus, *here, a certain son of family goes forth out of faith from the household life into homelessness, thinking,*

5.2 *‘I am beset by birth, decay, death, sorrow, lamentation, bodily pains, mental pains and despair; beset by suffering; overcome by suffering.*

*Perhaps an ending of this whole mass of suffering could be known.’*

5.3 *When he has thus gone forth as a recluse, this brings him **gains, honours and fame.***

*On account of the gains, honours and fame, he is satisfied, his intention fulfilled.*

*On account of the gains, honours and fame, he lauds himself and [193] blames others, thus:*

*‘I am one with gains, honours and fame, but these other monks are little known, of no account.’*

5.4 *On account of the gains, honours and fame, he is intoxicated, heedless, falls into heedlessness.*  
*Being heedless, he dwells in suffering.*

<sup>24</sup> *Aham asmi lābha, sakkāra, silokavā, ime pan’aññe bhikkhū appa-ñ, ñātā app’esakkhāti.* Comy explains *app’esakkha* monks as those “having a small retinue; going before or after a meal-offering, they receive nothing” (MA 2:231,-24 f); MA 3:204,5; MA ad M 3:38,23; AA ad A 2:203,3.

<sup>25</sup> *So tena lābha, sakkāra, silokena majjati pamajjati pamādam āpajjati, pamatto samāno dukkham viharati.*

<sup>26</sup> This whole section as at **Cūḷa Sārôpama S** (M 30,4), SD 53.9.

<sup>27</sup> *Seyyathā’pi bhikkhave puriso sār’atthiko sāra, gavesī sāra, pariyesanam caramāno mahato rukkhassa tiṭṭhato sāravato.* (**Sāriputta**) **Cunda S** (S 47.13) records Ānanda’s grief on hearing of Sāriputta’s final nirvana from Cunda, describing it as if “the largest branch had broken off a great tree standing possessed of heartwood” (S 47.13/5:164), SD 110.5.

<sup>28</sup> *Yañ c’assa sārena sāra, karaṇiyam tañ c’assa attham nānubhavissatīti.* The former *assa* is 3 sg pot (or opt, expressing “wish”; Sn 49; Dh 10, 123) of *atthi*, “to be, exist, to be found,” while the latter is sg dat/gen of *idam*, “this” (esp in sandhi or compounds). The former *assa* cannot be sg dat/gen since what he has is *not sāra*. This applies to the 1<sup>st</sup> 4 occurrences [§§4.6, 7.6, 10.6, 13.6] but not the last [§16.5 *anubhavissatīti*].

5.5 Bhikshus, this monk is called one who grasps **the branches and foliage of the holy life**. With that he comes to the end (of the holy life).<sup>29</sup>

## (2) Danger of self-satisfaction with moral virtue

6 Here, bhikshus, a certain son of family, out of faith, goes forth from the household life into homelessness, thinking,

6.2 *'I am beset by birth, decay, death, sorrow, lamentation, bodily pains, mental pains and despair; beset by suffering; overcome by suffering.*

*Perhaps an ending of this whole mass of suffering could be known.'*

6.3 When he has thus gone forth as a recluse, this brings him gains, honours and fame.

*On account of the gains, honours and fame, he is unsatisfied, his intention unfulfilled.*

*On account of the gains, honours and fame, he neither lauds himself nor blames others.*

*On account of the gains, honours and fame, he is not intoxicated, *not* heedless, falls *not* into heedlessness.*

6.4 Being diligent, he gains **accomplishment in moral virtue**.<sup>30</sup>

*On account of the accomplishment in moral virtue, he is satisfied, his intention fulfilled.*

*On account of the accomplishment in moral virtue, he lauds himself and blames others, thus:*

*'I am one morally virtuous, good by nature, but these other monks are *immoral, bad by nature*.'*<sup>31</sup>

6.5 *On account of the accomplishment in moral virtue, he is intoxicated, heedless, falls into heedlessness.*

Being heedless, he dwells in suffering.

## The heartwood-seeker who takes only the outer bark

7 Suppose, bhikshus, a person needing heartwood, *wandering about seeking heartwood, in quest of heartwood, comes across just such a huge tree standing possessed of heartwood*.

7.2 Disregarding the heartwood, the sapwood, the inner bark, he trims off **the outer bark** and takes it away, thinking that it were heartwood.

7.3 **A man with good eyes**, seeing him, would say:

*'Alas! This good man knows not heartwood. He knows not sapwood. He knows not the inner bark. He knows not the outer bark. He knows not branches and foliage.*

7.4 *Thus, this good man, needing heartwood, wandering about seeking heartwood, in quest of heartwood, comes across just such a huge tree standing possessed of heartwood.*

7.5 *Disregarding the heartwood, the sapwood, the inner bark, he trims off only the outer bark and takes it away, thinking that it were heartwood.*

7.6 Whatever it is that is to be made from heartwood, there will be *no* such benefit for him!

<sup>29</sup> *Ayaṃ vuccati bhikkhave bhikkhu sākhā, palāsaṃ aggahesi brahma, cariyassa, tena ca vosānaṃ āpādi. Aggahesi* is aor 3 sg of *gaṇhāti*, "he takes (hold of), seizes" but here rendered as present tense throughout. *Āpādi* is aor 3 sg of *āpajjati*, here meaning "to come to, attain, reach (a state or condition)." Comy says that he thinks that "thus far is enough that the essence has been attained by me" (*alam ettāvatā sāro me patto*, MA 2:231,29 f). "The essence" (*sāra*) means awakening, even arhathood.

<sup>30</sup> *Appamatto samāno sīla, sampadaṃ ārādheti.*

<sup>31</sup> *Aham asmi sīlavā kalyāṇa, dhammo, ime paṇ'āññe bhikkhū dussīlā papa, dhammāti.*

## REFRAIN 2 (THE SELF-RIGHTEOUS MORALIST)

8 Even so, bhikshus, here, a certain son of family goes forth out of faith from the household life into homelessness, thinking,

8.2 'I am beset by birth, decay, death, sorrow, lamentation, bodily pains, mental pains and despair; beset by suffering; overcome by suffering.

Perhaps an ending of this whole mass of suffering could be known.'

8.3 When he has thus gone forth as a recluse, this brings him **gains, honours and fame**.

On account of the gains, honours and fame, he is unsatisfied, his intention unfulfilled.

On account of the gains, honours and fame, he neither lauds himself nor blames others.

On account of the gains, honours and fame, he is not intoxicated, *not* heedless, falls *not* into heedlessness.

8.4 Being diligent, he gains **accomplishment in moral virtue**.

On account of the accomplishment in moral virtue, he is satisfied, his intention fulfilled.

On account of the accomplishment in moral virtue, he lauds himself and blames others, thus:

'I am one with morally virtuous, good by nature, but these other monks are immoral, bad by nature.'

8.5 On account of the accomplishment in moral virtue, he is intoxicated, heedless, falls into heedlessness.

Being heedless, he dwells in suffering. [194]

8.6 Bhikshus, this monk is called one who grasps **the outer bark of the holy life**. With that he comes to the end (of the holy life).<sup>32</sup>

(3) Danger of self-satisfaction with meditation

9 Here, bhikshus, a certain son of family, out of faith, goes forth from the household life into homelessness, thinking,

9.2 'I am beset by birth, decay, death, sorrow, lamentation, bodily pains, mental pains and despair; beset by suffering; overcome by suffering.

Perhaps an ending of this whole mass of suffering could be known.'

9.3 When he has thus gone forth as a recluse, this brings him gains, honours and fame.

On account of the gains, honours and fame, he is unsatisfied, his intention unfulfilled.

On account of the gains, honours and fame, he neither lauds himself nor blames others.

On account of the gains, honours and fame, he is not intoxicated, *not* heedless, falls *not* into heedlessness.

9.3 Being diligent, he gains accomplishment in moral virtue.

On account of the accomplishment in moral virtue, he is unsatisfied, but his intention unfulfilled.<sup>33</sup>

On account of the accomplishment in moral virtue, he neither lauds himself nor blames others.

On account of the accomplishment in moral virtue, he is not intoxicated, *not* heedless, falls *not* into heedlessness.

<sup>32</sup> *Ayaṃ vuccati bhikkhave bhikkhu papaṭikam aggahesi brahma, cariyassa, tena ca vosānam āpādi.*

<sup>33</sup> All MSS *attamano no ca kho paripuṇṇa, saṅkappo*, also at §§11.3 + 12 + 14 + 15 + 17 ad loc. Cf **Cūḷa Sārôpama S** (M 30,11.7) n ad loc.



9.5 Being diligent, he gains **accomplishment in *samadhi* [meditation]**.

*On account of the accomplishment in *samadhi*, he is satisfied, his intention fulfilled.*

*On account of the accomplishment in *samadhi*, he lauds himself and blames others, thus:*

'I am one mentally concentrated, with oneness of mind, but these other monks are *mentally unconcentrated, scatter-brained*.<sup>34</sup>

9.6 *On account of the accomplishment in *samadhi*, he is intoxicated, heedless, falls into heedlessness.*

Being heedless, he dwells in suffering.

### The heartwood-seeker who takes only the inner bark

10 Suppose, bhikshus, a person needing heartwood, *wandering about seeking heartwood, in quest of heartwood, passes by just such a huge tree standing possessed of heartwood.*

10.2 Disregarding the heartwood, the sapwood, he trims off **the inner bark** and takes it away, thinking that it were heartwood.

10.3 **A man with good eyes**, seeing him, would say:

'Alas! This good man knows not heartwood. He knows not sapwood. He knows not the inner bark. He knows not the outer bark. He knows not branches and foliage.

10.4 Thus, this good man, *needing heartwood, wandering about seeking heartwood, in quest of heartwood, passes by just such a huge tree standing possessed of heartwood.*

10.5 *Disregarding the heartwood, the sapwood, the inner bark, he trims off the inner bark and takes it away, thinking that it were heartwood.*

10.6 Whatever it is that is to be made from heartwood, there will be *no* such benefit for him!

### REFRAIN 3 (THE SELF-RIGHTEOUS MEDITATOR)

11 Even so, bhikshus, *here, a certain son of family goes forth out of faith from the household life into homelessness, thinking,*

11.2 'I am beset by birth, decay, death, sorrow, lamentation, bodily pains, mental pains and despair; beset by suffering; overcome by suffering.

*Perhaps an ending of this whole mass of suffering could be known.'*

11.3 *When he has thus gone forth as a recluse, this brings him gains, honours and fame.*

*On account of the gains, honours and fame, he is unsatisfied, his intention unfulfilled.<sup>35</sup>*

*On account of the gains, honours and fame, he neither lauds himself nor blames others.*

*On account of the gains, honours and fame, he is not intoxicated, *not* heedless, falls *not* into heedlessness.*

11.4 *Being diligent, he gains accomplishment in moral virtue.*

*On account of the accomplishment in moral virtue, he is unsatisfied, his intention unfulfilled.*

*On account of the accomplishment in moral virtue, he neither lauds himself nor blames others.*

*On account of the accomplishment in moral virtue, he is not intoxicated, *not* heedless, falls *not* into heedlessness.*

<sup>34</sup> *Aham asmi samāhito ek'agga,citto, ime pan'aññe bhikkhū asamāhitā vibbhanta'cittāti.*

<sup>35</sup> Be Ee *attamano no ca kho paripuṇṇa,saṅkappo*; I follow Ce Se *na attamano na paripuṇṇa,saṅkappo*. See §9.3 n ad loc.

11.5 *Being diligent, he gains accomplishment in **samadhi** [meditation].*

*On account of the accomplishment in samadhi, he is satisfied, his intention fulfilled.*

*On account of the accomplishment in samadhi, he lauds himself and blames others, thus:*

*'I am one mentally concentrated, with oneness of mind, but these other monks are mentally unconcentrated, scatter-brained.'*

11.6 *On account of the accomplishment in samadhi, he is intoxicated, heedless, falls into heedlessness.*

*Being heedless, he dwells in suffering.*

11.7 Bhikshus, this [195] monk is called one who grasps **the inner bark of the holy life**. With that he comes to the end (of the holy life).<sup>36</sup>

#### (4) Danger of self-satisfaction with knowledge and vision

**12** Here, bhikshus, a certain son of family, out of faith, goes forth from the household life into homelessness, thinking,

12.2 *'I am beset by birth, decay, death, sorrow, lamentation, bodily pains, mental pains and despair; beset by suffering; overcome by suffering.*

*Perhaps an ending of this whole mass of suffering could be known.'*

12.3 When he has thus gone forth as a recluse, this brings him gains, honours and fame.

*On account of the gains, honours and fame, he is unsatisfied, his intention unfulfilled.*

*On account of the gains, honours and fame, he neither lauds himself nor blames others.*

*On account of the gains, honours and fame, he is not intoxicated, not heedless, falls not into heedlessness.*

12.4 Being diligent, he gains accomplishment in moral virtue.

*On account of the accomplishment in moral virtue, he is unsatisfied, his intention unfulfilled.<sup>37</sup>*

*On account of the accomplishment in moral virtue, he neither lauds himself nor blames others.*

*On account of the accomplishment in moral virtue, he is not intoxicated, not heedless, falls not into heedlessness.*

12.5 Being diligent, he gains accomplishment in samadhi.

*On account of the accomplishment in samadhi, he is unsatisfied, his intention unfulfilled.<sup>38</sup>*

*On account of the accomplishment in samadhi, he neither lauds himself nor blames others.*

*On account of the accomplishment in samadhi, he is not intoxicated, not heedless, falls not into heedlessness.*

12.6 Being diligent, he gains **knowledge and vision**.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>36</sup> *Ayaṃ vuccati bhikkhave bhikkhu tacāṃ aggahesi brahma, cariyassa, tena ca vosānaṃ āpādi.*

<sup>37</sup> Be Ee *attamano no ca kho paripuṇṇa, saṅkappo*; I follow Ce Se *na attamano na paripuṇṇa, saṅkappo*. See §9.3 n ad loc.

<sup>38</sup> Be Ee *attamano no ca kho paripuṇṇa, saṅkappo*; I follow Ce Se *na attamano na paripuṇṇa, saṅkappo*. See §9.3 n ad loc.

<sup>39</sup> "Knowledge and vision," *ñāṇa, dassana*. Comy understands the term here as referring to 5 (mundane) super-knowledges (*pañcābhīññā*), but here it refers to the one standing as the last, ie, karmic recollection or the divine eye (*dibba, cakkhu ca pañcannaṃ abhiññānaṃ matthake ṭhitaṃ, tam imasmim vuttarṃ*, MA 2:231,31-33). However, pace Buddhaghosa, we can take *ñāṇa, dassana* as "knowledge and vision" of the path (*magga ñāṇa, dassana*), which is still not nirvana: see **Ratha Vinīta S** (M 24,12), SD 28.3.

*On account of the knowledge and vision, he is satisfied, his intention fulfilled.*

*On account of the accomplishment in samadhi, he lauds himself and blames others, thus:*

*'I am one who dwells knowing and seeing, but these other monks dwell with neither knowing nor seeing.'*<sup>40</sup>

12.7 *On account of the accomplishment in knowledge and vision, he is intoxicated, heedless, falls into heedlessness.*

Being heedless, he dwells in suffering.

### The heartwood-seeker who takes only the sapwood

**13** Suppose, bhikshus, a person needing heartwood, wandering about seeking heartwood, in quest of heartwood, passes by just such a huge tree standing possessed of heartwood.

13.2 Disregarding the heartwood, he trims off the sapwood and takes it away, thinking that it were heartwood.

13.3 **A man with good eyes**, seeing him, would say:

*'Alas! This good man knows not heartwood. He knows not sapwood. He knows not the inner bark. He knows not the outer bark. He knows not branches and foliage.*

13.4 Thus, this good man, needing heartwood, wandering about seeking heartwood, in quest of heartwood, passes by just such a huge tree standing possessed of heartwood.

13.5 Disregarding the heartwood, he trims off the sapwood and takes it away, thinking that it were heartwood.

13.6 Whatever it is that is to be made from heartwood, there will be no such benefit for him! **[196]**

#### REFRAIN 4 (THE SELF-RIGHTEOUS VISIONARY)

**14** Even so, bhikshus, here, a certain son of family goes forth out of faith from the household life into homelessness, thinking,

14.2 *'I am beset by birth, decay, death, sorrow, lamentation, bodily pains, mental pains and despair; beset by suffering; overcome by suffering.*

*Perhaps an ending of this whole mass of suffering could be known.'*

14.3 *When he has thus gone forth as a recluse, this brings him gains, honours and fame.*

*On account of the gains, honours and fame, he is unsatisfied, but his intention unfulfilled.*<sup>41</sup>

*On account of the gains, honours and fame, he neither lauds himself nor blames others.*

*On account of the gains, honours and fame, he is not intoxicated, not heedless, falls not into heedlessness.*

14.4 *Being diligent, he gains accomplishment in moral virtue.*

*On account of the accomplishment in moral virtue, he is unsatisfied, his intention unfulfilled.*<sup>42</sup>

*On account of the accomplishment in moral virtue, he neither lauds himself nor blames others.*

*On account of the accomplishment in moral virtue, he is not intoxicated, not heedless, falls not into heedlessness.*

<sup>40</sup> *Aham asmi jānaṃ passaṃ viharāmi, ime paṇṇāsa bhikkhū ajānaṃ apassaṃ viharantīti.*

<sup>41</sup> Be Ee attamano no ca kho paripuṇṇa,saṅkappo; I follow Ce Se na attamano na paripuṇṇa,saṅkappo. See §9.3 n ad loc.

<sup>42</sup> Be Ee attamano no ca kho paripuṇṇa,saṅkappo; I follow Ce Se na attamano na paripuṇṇa,saṅkappo. See §9.3 n ad loc.

14.5 *Being diligent, he gains accomplishment in samadhi.*

*On account of the accomplishment in samadhi, he is unsatisfied, his intention unfulfilled.*

*On account of the accomplishment in samadhi, he neither lauds himself nor blames others.*

*On account of the accomplishment in samadhi, he is not intoxicated, *not* heedless, falls *not* into heedlessness.*

14.6 Being diligent [not heedless], he gains **knowledge and vision**.

*On account of knowledge and vision, he is satisfied, his intention fulfilled.*

*On account of knowledge and vision, he he lauds himself and blames others, thus:*

*'I am one who dwells knowing and seeing, but these other monks dwell with *neither knowing nor seeing*.'*

14.7 *On account of the knowledge and vision, he is intoxicated, heedless, falls into heedlessness.*

*Being heedless, he dwells in suffering.*

14.8 Bhikshus, this monk is called one who grasps **the sapwood of the holy life**.<sup>43</sup> With that he comes to the end (of the holy life).

## (5) The attainment of the permanent liberation

15 Here, bhikshus, a certain son of family, out of faith, goes forth from the household life into homelessness, thinking,

15.2 *'I am beset by birth, decay, death, sorrow, lamentation, bodily pains, mental pains and despair; beset by suffering; overcome by suffering.*

*Perhaps an ending of this whole mass of suffering could be known.'*

15.3 When he has thus gone forth as a recluse, this brings him gains, honours and fame.

*On account of the gains, honours and fame, he is unsatisfied, his intention unfulfilled.<sup>44</sup>*

*On account of the gains, honours and fame, he neither lauds himself nor blames others.*

*On account of the gains, honours and fame, he is not intoxicated, *not* heedless, falls *not* into heedlessness.*

15.4 Being diligent, he gains accomplishment in moral virtue.

*On account of the accomplishment in moral virtue, he is unsatisfied, but his intention unfulfilled.<sup>45</sup>*

*On account of the accomplishment in moral virtue, he neither lauds himself nor blames others.*

*On account of the accomplishment in moral virtue, he is not intoxicated, *not* heedless, falls *not* into heedlessness.*

15.5 Being diligent, he gains accomplishment in samadhi.

*On account of the accomplishment in samadhi, he is unsatisfied, but his intention unfulfilled.<sup>46</sup>*

*On account of the accomplishment in samadhi, he neither lauds himself nor blames others.*

*On account of the accomplishment in samadhi, he is not intoxicated, *not* heedless, falls *not* into heedlessness.*

15.6 Being diligent, he gains knowledge and vision.

*On account of knowledge and vision, he is unsatisfied, his intention unfulfilled.*

<sup>43</sup> "(A) monk ... who grasps the sapwood of the holy life" (*pheggurñ aggahesi brahma, cariyassa*).

<sup>44</sup> Be Ee *attamano no ca kho paripuñña, sañkappo*; Ce Se *na attamano na paripuñña, sañkappo*. See §9.3 n ad loc.

<sup>45</sup> Be Ee *attamano no ca kho paripuñña, sañkappo*; Ce Se *na attamano na paripuñña, sañkappo*. See §9.3 n ad loc.

<sup>46</sup> Be Ee *attamano no ca kho paripuñña, sañkappo*; Ce Se *na attamano na paripuñña, sañkappo*. See §9.3 n ad loc.

15.7 *On account of knowledge and vision, he is not intoxicated, *not* heedless, falls *not* into heedlessness.*

Being diligent [not heedless], he gains **permanent liberation**.<sup>47</sup>

15.8 It is impossible, bhikshus, there is no way that the monk would fall away from that permanent liberation.<sup>48</sup>

### The heartwood-seeker finds heartwood

**16** Suppose, bhikshus, a person needing heartwood, *wandering about seeking heartwood, in quest of heartwood, passes by just such a huge tree standing possessed of heartwood.*

16.2 Trimming off **the heartwood**, he would take it away, knowing<sup>49</sup> that it is heartwood.<sup>50</sup>

16.3 **A man of good eyes**, seeing him, would say:

'Indeed, this good man is one who knows heartwood. He knows sapwood. He knows the inner bark. He knows the outer bark. He knows branches and foliage.

16.4 Thus, this good man, *needing heartwood, wandering about seeking heartwood, in quest of heartwood, comes to just such a huge [197] tree possessing heartwood.*

16.5 Whatever it is that is to be made from heartwood of his, there will be such benefit for him!<sup>51</sup>

#### REFRAIN 5 (THE PERMANENTLY LIBERATED)

**17** Even so, bhikshus, here, *a certain son of family goes forth out of faith from the household life into homelessness, thinking,*

17.2 *'I am beset by birth, decay, death, sorrow, lamentation, bodily pains, mental pains and despair; beset by suffering; overcome by suffering.*

*Perhaps an ending of this whole mass of suffering could be known.'*

17.3 *When he has thus gone forth as a recluse, this brings him gains, honours and fame.*

*On account of the gains, honours and fame, he is satisfied, but his intention unfulfilled.*<sup>52</sup>

*On account of the gains, honours and fame, he neither lauds himself nor blames others.*

*On account of the gains, honours and fame, he is not intoxicated, *not* heedless, falls *not* into heedlessness.*

<sup>47</sup> *Appamatto samāno asamaya, vimokkhaṃ ārādheti.* "Permanent liberation," *asamaya, vimokkha*, ie, the 4 paths, the fruits and nirvana: see DEB magga 4. See SD 2,10 (3.1) n; SD 4.25 (2.1.2); SD 11.4 (3.2). Cf *akuppā ceto, vimutti* [§18.2].

<sup>48</sup> *Aṭṭhānam etaṃ, bhikkhave, anavakāso yaṃ so bhikkhu tāya asamaya, vimuttiyā pariḥayetha.* Be Ce read as *asamaya, vimokkha* in the preceding sentence and *asamaya, vimuttiyā* here. Both *vimokkha* (liberation) and *vimutti* (freedom) are synonymous. Ee Se readings *ṭhānam* and *samaya* are wrong. Both Horner (M:H) and Ñāṇamoli (M:Ñ) use the wrong readings in their trs. Comy cites **Paṭisambhidā, magga** (Pm 2:40) for a def of *asamaya, vimokkha* (lit, "non-temporal" or "perpetual" liberation) as the 4 paths, 4 fruits and nirvana, and of *samaya, vimokkha* (temporal liberation) as the 4 dhyanas and 4 formless attainments. See also **Mahā Suññata S** (M 122,4), SD 11.4.

<sup>49</sup> "Knowing," *jānamano*, which appears only in this connection (the heartwood). In all the previous cases of the other tree-parts, the verb is "thinking" (*maññamāno*) [§§7.2+7.5; 10.2+10.5; 13.2+13.5].

<sup>50</sup> *Sārañ-ñeva chetvā ādāya pakkameyya 'sāran'ti jānamāno.*

<sup>51</sup> *Yañ c'assa sārena sāra, karaṇiyam tañ c'assa attham anubhavissatīti.* The *assa* in both cases is sg dat/gen of *idam*, "this" (esp in sandhi or compounds). They refer to *sāra*. This is not the case in their previous occurrences [§§4.6, 7.6, 10.6, 13.6], where see §4.6 n.

<sup>52</sup> Be Ee *attamano no ca kho paripuṇṇa, saṅkappo*; Ce Se *na attamano na paripuṇṇa, saṅkappo*. See §9.3 n ad loc.

17.4 *Being diligent, he gains accomplishment in moral virtue.*

*On account of the accomplishment in moral virtue, he is unsatisfied, his intention unfulfilled.*

*On account of the accomplishment in moral virtue, he is satisfied, but his intention unfulfilled.<sup>53</sup>*

*On account of the accomplishment in moral virtue, he is not intoxicated, *not* heedless, falls *not* into heedlessness.*

17.5 *Being diligent, he gains accomplishment in samadhi.*

*On account of the accomplishment in samadhi, he is unsatisfied, but his intention unfulfilled.<sup>54</sup>*

*On account of the accomplishment in samadhi, he is not intoxicated, *not* heedless, falls *not* into heedlessness.*

17.6 *Being diligent, he gains knowledge and vision.*

*On account of knowledge and vision, he is unsatisfied, his intention unfulfilled.*

17.7 *On account of knowledge and vision, he is not intoxicated, *not* heedless, falls *not* into heedlessness.*

*Being diligent, he gains **permanent liberation**.<sup>55</sup>*

*It is impossible, bhikshus, there is no way that the monk would fall away from that permanent liberation.*

### The unshakeable freedom of mind

18 So, bhikshus, this holy life [brahmafaring]<sup>56</sup>

does not have gains, honours and fame as its benefit;

does not have the accomplishment of moral virtue as its benefit;

does not have the accomplishment of samadhi as its benefit;

does not have knowledge and vision as its benefit.<sup>57</sup>

18.2 But, bhikshus, it is this heartwood [core], this end—this **unshakeable freedom of mind**<sup>58</sup>—that is the goal of holy life.”

19 The Blessed One said this. Satisfied, the monks approved of the Blessed One’s word.

— evaṃ —

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<sup>53</sup> Be Ee *attamano no ca kho paripuṇṇa,saṅkappo*; Ce Se *na attamano na paripuṇṇa,saṅkappo*. See §9.3 n ad loc.

<sup>54</sup> Be Ee *attamano no ca kho paripuṇṇa,saṅkappo*; Ce Se *na attamano na paripuṇṇa,saṅkappo*. See §9.3 n ad loc.

<sup>55</sup> This “permanent liberation” (*asamaya,vimokkha*) includes all 4 paths and fruitions. Thus, it is broader in meaning than the “unshakeable freedom of mind” (*akuppā ceto,vimutti*) which alone is declared to be the goal of the holy life. [§18.2n]

<sup>56</sup> This statement on the nature of the holy life and its goal [§18] recurs at **Cūḷa Sārôpama S** (M 30,23/1:204 f), SD 53.9.

<sup>57</sup> The holy life does not have any of these as its goal because its only goal is the fruit of arhathood (MA 2:232). “**Unshakeable freedom of mind**” (*akuppā ceto,vimutti*) is that fruit of arhathood (MA). Although the “permanent liberation”—encompassing all 4 paths and 4 fruitions—has a wider range of meaning than “unshakeable freedom of mind,” the former alone is declared to be the goal of the holy life (MA 2:232,15). Cf “permanent liberation” (*asamaya vimokkha*) [§17.7]

<sup>58</sup> “Unshakeable freedom of mind” (*akuppā ceto,vimutti*): see prec n.